



Sunday, October 20, 2019,

The string of attachment



By - Dr. Nunglekpam premi devi
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Ah! I see them, so loving and caring;
Their parents, their brothers and sisters;
Shared theirs until their growing individuals;
Laughed and patted; ate and shared bed;
Shirts and trouser; bike and rides;
Sister! Oh common to all, so lovely;
His sister and her brothers, proud to mention all;
She's so shining like a diamond in the ring;
"Tamo and Echan, Tachaou and tayai"
"Baba and Eton, kaka and Endomcha"
"Eche and Enao, Nanao and Eyai"
"Khura and Endon, Mamma and Ene"
"Sagai and Natei, Echil and Enao"
"Mari and matai, chafu and u-yan"
Waking up all calls, so verbally fixed;
Something's missing all attention,
This string of attachment, all decoding.

Your neighbor their neighbor, neighbor's neighborhood;
Your boundary their boundary, boundaries boundary;
Your pillar their pillar, boundaries' pillars;
Your name their name, name's name original;
Your dialet their dialet, dialet 's dialects;
Your leader their leader, leaders' leader;
Your talk their talking, talking talks;
Oh! So sadly, you forgot thy sister's sister;
Cutting and drawing all lining up;
Breaking and mapping all in the name of mother;
Killing and be killed all in the name of father;
Your blood so weakened; your existence so lame;
He's losing she's burning, all blaming hell;
Wake up! Wake up sisters, your calls be questioning;
No brother's stands withholding clear;
This string of attachment, all decoded.

Moves! All seems so tricky and trigrering;
His steps their steps, all recording;
Discussion and discussing, pulling apart;
Their mother and our mother;
Our father and their father, all marking;
One in the head, one in the neck
One in the arms, one in the hand
One in the breast, one in the belly
One in the thingh, one in the leg
Piece by piece; solid by solid
Shedding bloods, so easily violent;
Holding by 'her' hair; not an eye catches love;
Draining and drinking; so wild dancing,
"My land! My mother, my birthright;
Behold tight, wishing it could be 'we're together;
Your temple their church,
Your masjid their temple,
Their wishing your wishing;
Tears! Oh tears, your shedding's so mimicry;
Make the bond; make the slogan;
This string of attachment, all decoded.

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Centennial Commemoration of Kuki Rebellion 1917-1919 is an a historical outlook towards Zeliangrong Movement led by Jadonang and Rani Gaidinliu

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Certain parts of Manipur witnessed commemoration of Kuki rebellion, 1917-1919 in the last two years. The Kuki rebellion, as described in the colonial accounts, or Anglo Kuki War in the words of Kuki people, is rooted in the First World War. The British reached out to Nagas, Lushais, Kukis and other tribes in their recruits for labour corps in France. The Kuki refused the call for labour corps and the British did not take this lightly which later led to Kuki rebellion against the British in 1917, and the Kuki were eventually contained by the British in 1919. This incident is taken as a significant event in the colonial history of the region. The Kuki commemorated 'Kuki rebellion, 1917-1919' in 2017 and 2018 to mark its hundred years. This year 2019 marks the last series of hundred years of the Kuki rebellion commemoration. The main centennial commemoration of Kuki rebellion was held at C. Aisan Village, Kangpokpi District. As a part of this commemoration, the Kuki have decided to erect memorial stones in every village of Kuki with an inscription "In defence of our ancestral land and freedom."

The inscription on the memorial stones have evoked strong responses from various Naga civil societies where they objected that it is a ploy to claim the lands of Nagas as theirs and they also raised that the Kuki were not indigenous to Manipur. This ignited the long-standing confrontation between the Kuki and Nagas in Manipur state. This week, four Zeliangrong bodies- the Inpui Naga Union, Manipur (INU-

M), Liangmai Naga Council, Manipur (LNC- M), Rongmei Naga Council, Manipur (RNC-M) and Zeme Naga Council, Manipur (ZNC- M), released a joint statement urging the Government and district authorities to not allow centennial commemoration of the Kuki rebellion. The joint statement took strong objection to memorial stones being erected in the Naga ancestral land with the inscription "In defence of our ancestral land and freedom." The statement also added that during the Kuki rebellion, the Kukis attacked Naga villages where 289 Nagas and 4 Meiteis were killed and burnt 34 Naga villages. The attack on Naga happened simultaneously with its confrontation with the British. Tangkhul Naga Long (TNL), Ukhrul also released a statement on centennial commemoration of Kuki rebellion. They have urged and conveyed to all the chiefs of Kuki villages in Tangkhul area not to erect memorial stones with the said inscription concerning ancestral land. TNL took strong objection to it and informed them that the Kuki village in Tangkhul land is non-existent during 1917-1919. A memorandum from Naga civil societies in Chandel, was also submitted to the Chief Minister of Manipur bringing to his attention the inscription on the memorial stone and the proposed commemoration of Kuki rebellion with memorial stones in Langching village, Chakpikarong block and Maolhang village, Machi block. Later on, All Naga Student Association, Manipur (ANSAM), Zeliangrong Union (ZU), Naga Students & #39; Union Delhi (NSUD), United Naga Council (UNC), and valley based United Committee Manipur (UCM), All Manipur United Clubs & #39;

Organisation (AMUCO) etc also issued statements against the inscription on memorial stones for commemoration of Kuki Rebellion and the projection of 'Kuki Rebellion' as 'Anglo Kuki War'. Taking stock of the situations, the government of Manipur issued an order on October 13 where it stated that memorial stones for Kuki Rebellion 1917-1919 containing the inscription "in defence of our ancestral land and freedom" must be removed on the grounds that it may cause a breach of peace and possibility of law and order problem.

A commemoration of Kuki Rebellion means differently for Naga tribes who suffered in the hands of Kuki. There are several writings from scholars like Gangmumei Kamei, Arkotong Longkumer, Asoso Yonuo, Ursula Graham Bower, Lal Dena etc which gave an account that emergence of Zeliangrong movement under Jadonang and Rani Gaidinliu stems from the ethnic attack on Zeliangrong people during Kuki rebellion 1917-1919. They saw this point of history as one of the reasons behind the Zeliangrong movement against the British colonial rule, in the late 1920s. Zeliangrong people around that time were dismayed with the British that they were not protected properly from the attack of Kuki, and they felt that the British were not trustworthy leading to distrust with the administration. This gave room for leaders like Jadonang and Rani Gaidinliu to include their people's anxiety, fear and insecurity, into the basis of waging Zeliangrong movement to liberate the Nagas from the British colonial rule.

In the memorialisation process of the Kuki Rebellion, 1917-1919, the Kuki present it solely as a fight

against the British by not delving into its ripple to neighbouring tribes around the time and how it affected them. This selective making of history amounts to a distortion of history, for the fact that there are accounts of violence carried out heavily on Zeliangrong Naga people during the Kuki Rebellion. Similar erasure is being attempted to Naga-Kuki conflict of 1990s where Kuki are portraying themselves as victims to an event where both Kuki and Naga suffered heavy casualties, loss of resources and livelihood. Presentation of selective history is insidious in a sense that it erases the driving force behind these events, which is ethnic tension at worst and ethnic contestation at best. This becomes very crucial to understand the dynamics of ethnicity and give attention as to how a selective narration which overlaps with neighbouring community can do more harm than it has us believed otherwise initially. It is in this regard that both Naga and Kuki must reflect on what their ethnic politics does to neighbouring community. The cycle of violence and confrontation embodying ethnic politics will not see an end to it, unless history is revisited with an approach to make amends and reconciliation. This can perhaps pave way for building trust and instil a sense of co-habitation in harmony and peaceful living. The state must also take part in it to ensure that no further divide happens and look for ways to provide what each group of tribes seek. The region has been witnessing endless violence from the past, and the present generation fears a repeat of the past and they do not deserve a horror and trauma which their ancestors experienced it, and immediate elders continue to bear them with recurring anxieties.

OPEN LETTER to Chief Minister of Manipur

Dear Sir,

Divisive politics, so glaringly professed should have no place in a multi-cultured state like Manipur. That the TNL and other Manipur Nagas opposing the historic celebration is a no eyebrow raiser. Anyone with even superficial knowledge of Manipur Politics will know how the NSCN IM used all frontal Kacha Nagas to issue quit notices and eventually massacred Thousand Kuki innocents. These same group of people had even protested a memorial service for the Kukis so massacred. Now, your surprise and apprehension on their raising concerns about the centenary commemoration by out rightly ordering the ban of the inscription, knowing very well that the reaction is expected, shows either you are immature to handle communal politics or you have ulterior motives on your own. That KIM is invited after the order to ban the inscription was passed clearly indicates that your Govt. has taken the Kukis for granted. A series of meeting and consultation should have preceded the order. How many non-biased academicians have you consulted before deciding on changing Anglo-Kuki war to Kuki Rebellion? Will you dare fall to a demand by certain community to question Khongjom war? It is a known fact that the Britishers have made all efforts to hide one of their most humiliating experience by recording the large scale war as just Kuki uprising. Be that as it may, your Government is expected

to treat the Kukis much better than the British in acknowledging the historic event. Your pompous display of a professional community's festival on one day, and your calculated restraint from attending a centenary commemoration of a historic moment the next day, all in a span of two days shows your Govt.'s divisive politics in the Hills prompting the Kukis to feel unrepresented in your Governance. While law and order is a concern that all communities in the state should shoulder, your Govt. chose to ignore glaring threats from various organisations, allegedly fuelled by NSCN IM's ambitious plot of claiming all the Hills as their "ancestral land". Meanwhile, the Kukis are befooled by your Govt. to be torch-bearers of peace even as you open new domains for voice of dissent against the "inscription" to creep in. The Kuki CSO leaders were subjected to undue pressure and an 11th hour agreement was forged much to the dismay of the Kuki public. All the CSO leaders you have pressurised to fall in line to your authoritative and one-sided governance have now resigned. The inscription says "in defence of our ancestral land", which is exactly the reason for the Kukis to fight the British during the Anglo Kuki war. Your Government's illogical order to eliminate inscriptions of "ancestral land" should be revoked at the earliest possible. Nowhere in the world has a state objected to its people using defence of ancestral land in

commemoration of a memorial for Freedom fighters. It is indeed a shameful circumstance as to how a Government is requested to pay tribute to the Freedom fighters from its own state. Is it because Anglo Kuki war is a tribal movement? Being the head of a democratic Government in a state, you are at least expected not just to grace the commemoration of the event but to accord the recognition Anglo Kuki war is due. A state holiday, museum and Scholarships to name a few do not require a demand if only the Government is non-discriminatory in its governance. All FIRs on Kuki CSO leaders, who are no criminals by any measure but law-abiding citizens paying tribute to the freedom fighters of Anglo Kuki war should be dropped at the earliest possible. Any design to target any individuals or organisations who are connected to the commemoration of Anglo-Kuki war will tantamount to waging war on the Kuki people and their rights and the same will be protested with all means. An investigation should be conducted on alleged plot by NSCN IM to sabotage Anglo Kuki war commemoration programme and the open threat and hateful propaganda given by various organisations like TNL etc which incites the public with their blatant-lies filled PR that could fuel communal disharmony in the state and the connection between the two. The Kukis have seen repeated provocations be it when they

observe a memorial for the Thousand massacred Kukis during the NSCN IM Pogrom and now when Anglo-Kuki war centenary is commemorated. Restrain at the highest level has been maintained but the Government chose to land its whip on the Kukis thus setting a negative trend that 'the party with highest volume of voice of dissent' gets Government's sympathy. Your high authority is expected to rise above that level and resolve issue based on its fairness and justness. The Manipur Govt. ever since the issuance of the highly controversial and discriminatory order has by the day lost the trust of the Kuki people and if the Manipur Govt. really represent its people, some reality checks have to be effected. The trust deficit between the Govt. and the Kuki people are too wide now and the 10 points are not exclusive issues but few basic concerns the Govt. under Biren could look into it to ensure the Government is for all the people of Manipur including the Kukis and not exclusive to particular communities, as is evident now.

Yours sincerely

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